



# A Five Year Program Review of Infusing Occupational Therapy Into Over-Night Camping for Children with Disabilities

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## Objectives

- Describe an OT faculty-student training model in a nontraditional rural setting
- Provide examples of strategies to enhance campers' participation in a variety of activities
- Discuss the impact of occupational therapy program on satisfaction and participation of campers with disabilities

## Background Information

- Children with physical disabilities have the same desires as children without disabilities; they want to be **KIDS!**
- Because of their differences, these children are at risk for reduced participation in recreational activities (Majnemer et al, 2008; Mihaylov et al, 2004; Schreuer, Sachs, & Rosenblum, 2014).
- Summer camps offer children opportunities for social and physical growth through success (Easter Seals, 2008).



## Camp Dream Street - Utica, Mississippi

- A unique program for children with physical disabilities
- A weeklong overnight camp for children ages 7-14
- Campers are paired with high school counselors for all daily, evening, and overnight activities such as:
  - Cheerleading, sports, swimming, art, canoeing, drama
  - Family style meals in the dining hall
  - Interactive evening programs
  - Bonding with friends during cabin time
- Volunteer health and medical professionals, including occupational therapists, enhance programming by educating, consulting, and adapting activities to meet individual camper needs.



## Description of OT Program

The OT Team consists of a faculty member and her students from *OT699: Independent Study: Understanding Southern Jewish Cultural Values while Working with Children with Physical Disabilities in a Rural Community Setting.*



### Course Objectives Include:

- Understanding Southern history and cultural significance towards specific populations and how these factors might impact "participation;"
- Creating, organizing and implementing group activities for campers with physical and cognitive impairments at an overnight camp;
- Assisting with training counselors and staff on various strategies and intervention skills that promote safety and optimize camper performance;
- Collaborating with campers, counselors and staff to provide meaningful and effective strategies that support the camper's performance.

### Specific Interactions of OT Team during Camp Include:

- Creating adaptations or providing adaptive equipment for program activities such as mealtime, arts and crafts, cheerleading, dance, athletics, nature group, journalism, drama, free time, etc. in order to enhance camper participation;
- Ensuring safety strategies are followed throughout the day, including shower time in the cabins;
- Providing feedback to counselors about body mechanics during functional mobility activities;
- Assisting with functional mobility tasks throughout the day including at the pool and lake.

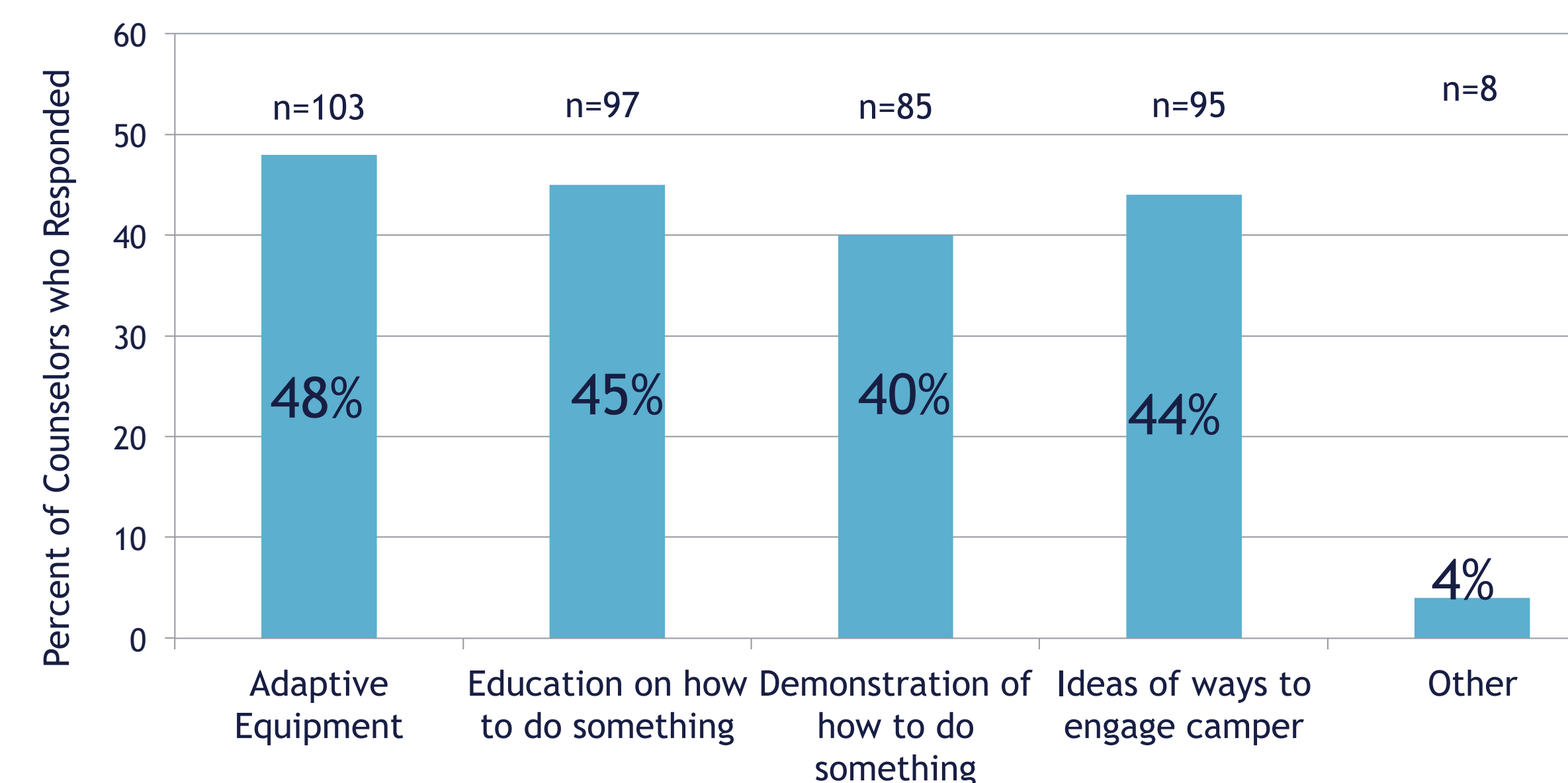
Since 2007, nine (9) OT Interns from Thomas Jefferson University and Alabama State University have participated in the OT Intern program.

## Program Outcomes

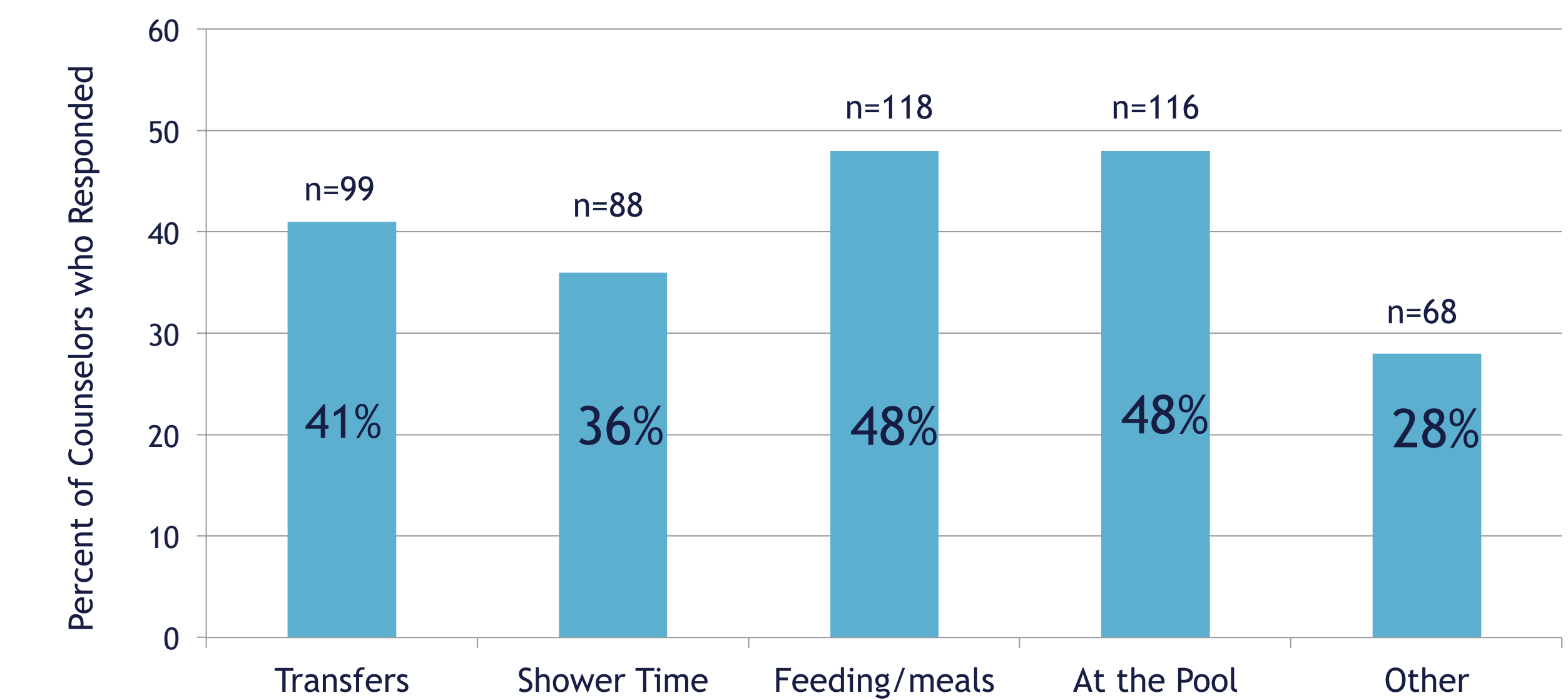
High School Counselors who were paired with a camper (n=251) were given a pre-camp and post-camp survey to evaluate the OT Team's effectiveness. The pre-camp survey was given during orientation and the post-camp survey was given after the third day (of four days) of camp. Selected results are exhibited from the post-camp survey.

65% of the counselor/staff indicated they interacted with a member of the OT team (n=277)

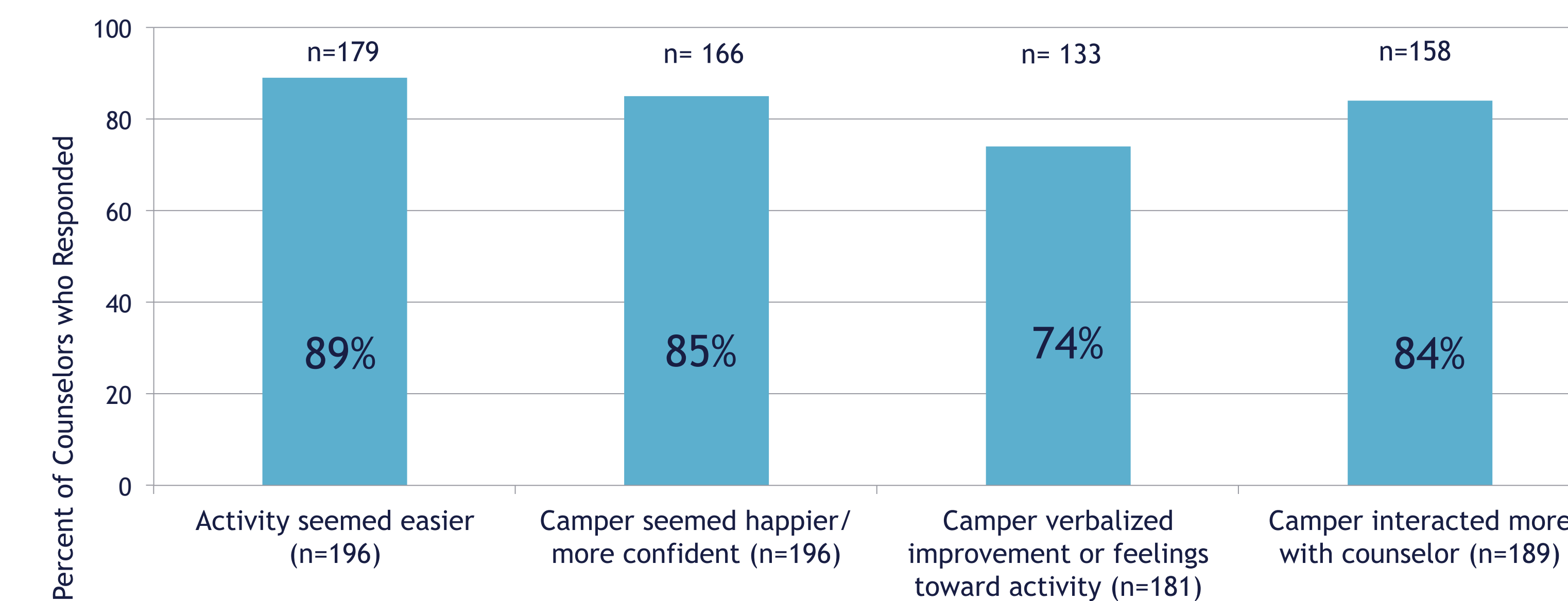
### During the interaction, the OT team provided you with...(n=214)



### Interactions between the OT team, camper and counselor took place (n=244):



### Describe the Changes Seen in Your Camper after an interaction with an OT Team member (strongly agree/agree responses reported)



### Demographics

- Gender (N=313)
  - 56% Female
  - 44% Male
- Role at Camp (n=244)
  - 79% Counselor
  - 20% Upper Staff
  - 1% Other



## Summary and Future Studies

- The OT Team was recognized and utilized by counselors and staff to positively impact the campers' experience during daily routine tasks and recreational activities.
- 62% of Counselors indicated he/she saw changes in their camper's participation AFTER working with an OT team member (n=203.)
- 74-89% of the counselors indicated his/her camper seemed "happier," "socialized more", or participated in the task "more easily." (n=181-196.)
- Future studies
  - Collect and analyze data from the campers' perspective regarding the Camp Dream Street-OT experience
  - Should address the number of OT Team members and camper/staff ratio to find the most efficient balance.
  - Identify other professional skills and factors that contribute to making non-traditional community-programs valuable training sites for OTS.